

Detectives Inc.™

A
TERROR
OF
DYING
DREAMS



CUT TO THE BONE!

The Graphic Mystery by Don M^cGregor and Gene Colan

The PENUMBRA

WRITE TO: ECLIPSE COMICS - P.O. BOX 1099 - FORESTVILLE - CALIFORNIA - 95436

ON THE RACKS

A indicates an *Airboy* crossover title.

S indicates a *Scout* crossover title.

4W indicates a 4Winds Production.

AIRBOY no. 34

Airboy, Skywolf and La Lupina back in Bogentilla and back in trouble!

KAMUI nos. 14 & 15

The second book of Kamui's adventures. *The Sword Wind* begins!

XENON nos. 1 & 2 *New Series!*

Powerful cyborg adventure in Eclipse International/Viz Comics latest manga bi-weekly.

THE LIBERTY PROJECT no. 7

The Liberty Project must face a super-powered vigilante attack on Project Headquarters!

NEW AMERICA no. 2 (of 4) *S 4W*

The Scout saga continues as Rose Winter sets Russia and Canada at each other's throats!

THE DREAMERY no. 7

Alice in Wonderland reaches its stunning conclusion. Plus another tale about your favorite centaurs.

VALKYRIE: Prisoner of the Past A

Collected for the first time, the sell-out mini-series is together in one graphic album. By Chuck Dixon and Paul Gulacy.

AREA 88 nos. 14 & 15

The pilots of Area 88 versus The Wolf Pack—the death!

MAI THE PSYCHIC GIRL nos. 14 & 15

Mai's chances of meeting her father are slim when the Wisdom Alliance sends Gärten to capture Mai.

STRIKE! no. 5 *4W*

Strike helps the Baltimore police with a situation that turns tragic.

ADOLESCENT RADIOACTIVE

BLACK BELT HAMSTERS no. 9

A special all-jam, final issue tribute to our four furry friends from Tibet.

WALT KELLY'S CHRISTMAS

CLASSICS no. 1 *New Title!*

Spend Christmas with two endearing Walt Kelly tales from the Forties—each featuring the one and only Santa Claus.

SWORDS OF TEXAS no. 3 (of 4) *S 4W*

Scout action continues as Banner and his Swords are ambushed by Mexican Communist Troops!

DIRECTORY TO A NONEXISTENT

UNIVERSE no. 1 *New Title!*

A special fun catalogue of all the characters who have never appeared in comics...and probably never should!

MAN OF WAR no. 2

Clues to hideous murders point to our hero, Man of War, as the culprit!

AIRBOY MEETS THE PROWLER no. 1

New Title! A 4W

Leo Kragg manipulates Scott Kida into meeting Airboy...why?

ZOT! no. 16

The De-Evolutionaries return and the whole populace is climbing trees. Watch out!

ALIEN WORLDS no. 1 *New Series!*

Bruce Jones' series is back with 46 pages of science fiction adventures illustrated by Bill Stout, Eric Shanower, Bill Wray, Bob Fingermaier, Ralph Reese and Tom Yeates.

WPA MURALS IN YOUR

TOWN?: This is a plea for your help. It's easy work, and you'll get a reward for your good deed, too. Here's what I want you to do:

Go down to your local post office and buy a plain pre-stamped postcard, the kind with room for the address on one side and a long message on the other side.

Now, look around you on the walls of the post office. Is there a MURAL on one of the walls? If there is, it will be up high, at one end of the room. The picture will probably relate to the local economy: agricultural or industrial scenes are the most common subjects.

If there is a mural, please walk over close to it and check for two things: 1) Was the mural painted on canvas and then glued onto the wall, or was it painted directly on the wall in fresco technique? If you can't tell the difference, don't worry; it's not that important. 2) Is the mural signed? If it is, make a note of the artist's name and the date (if any) on the mural.

Next, I want you to go outside and look at the building's facade. Are there cast concrete plaques high on the wall depicting transportation motifs, such as planes, locomotives, or ships? Is there a date plaque near one lower corner telling when the post office was built? (If so, note the date.)

There may be two standing lamps outside, flanking the front door. Are they Art Deco style, with metal discs and frosted glass?

Go back inside and look up at the ceiling lamps. Are they Art Deco style metal and glass?

Walk over to one of the handy writing tables provided in the post office. Take a good look at this table: is it made of wood or metal?

Okay, now get out the postcard and write down the following information, filling in the blanks:

I am in the post office in (city, state, zipcode).

This post office (does/does not) have a mural in it.

The mural is (canvas/ fresco). The mural depicts (describe mural).

It is signed by (name) and dated (date).

There (are/are not) "transportation plaques" outside.

There (is/is not) date plaque (give date if there is one).

The exterior lamps (are/are not) Art Deco style.

The interior lamps (are/are not) Art Deco style.

The writing table here is (wood/metal).

My name is (your name).

Send my free Eclipse comic book to (your address).

That's all there is to it! Mail your postcard to Eclipse and I will send you a free comic book. You can fill out cards on as many post offices as you can inspect and earn a free comic for each report! If you have complete runs of some Eclipse titles and don't want duplicates, let me know so I can send you a book from a series you don't already have.

Why do I want a report on your local post office? Well, during the Depression, the government hired some great artists to produce murals under the Works Progress Administration. Most of the murals were installed in post offices. Dean and I need to know where they are so we can photograph them on our next cross-country trip. We also need to know where they are NOT, so we don't waste time looking for them in the wrong places.

Thank you for your help. I appreciate it.

catherine yronwode
⊕

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Detective Second Grade Nathan Bishop tries to watch Denning and Rainier objectively. He is a cop, and he is supposed to remain dispassionate toward witnesses and possible murder suspects, but there is something about the twosome's camaraderie that partially sways him from that objectivity, and even makes him feel a twinge of jealousy.

From above, the cumbersome, routine noises of the corpse being maneuvered into a body bag help Bishop draw back, gather his objectivity about him like a protective cloak.

From below, Bishop can hear the wife and social worker answering his assistant, Arcuro's, questions.

The wife's voice is filled with the awareness of death, seen, touched, perhaps even committed.

You can't tell.



They can weep or rage or sit near catatonia; you can swear they might just as well be carted off in a body bag along with the victim, that they are just as dead. And you can find, despite all the denials and psychic pains, it was their hand that held the weapon, that slit the throat, that felt the first gush of warm blood.







MOVE BACK,
PLEASE. COMING
THROUGH.

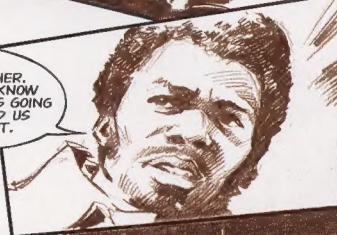


LISTEN...

WE KNOW THIS
ISN'T A JOKE. WE'LL
TELL YOU, BUT PLEASE,
TALK WITH HER
IN PRIVATE.

SHE'S A
SOCIAL WORKER
AND IT WON'T
WIN HER ANY
POINTS IF
THE POLICE
GO TO HER
SUPERIORS.

WE
TALKING
ABOUT THE
WOMAN
DOWNSTAIRS?
THIS DIERDRE
SEVENS?



YEAH. THE
WIFE CALLED HER.
DIERDRE DIDN'T KNOW
EXACTLY WHAT WAS GOING
ON, SO SHE ASKED US
TO CHECK IT OUT.

OKAY. I DON'T WANT
TO HAVE TO BE A **HARDCASE**
WITH YOU GUYS. FROM WHAT I'VE
HEARD SO FAR, THIS MAN ABUSED
HIS WIFE ON A **REGULAR BASIS**.
I DON'T LIKE THAT.

BUT I DON'T LIKE
SOLUTIONS WHERE SOMEONE'S
THROAT GETS SLICED OPEN
EITHER. YOU DIDN'T SEE
ANY WEAPON?

NO.

THE WIFE CLAIMS HE HAD
A STRAIGHT-EDGED RAZOR. NONE
OF OUR MEN FOUND IT. YOU'RE
SURE YOU DIDN'T SEE IT?

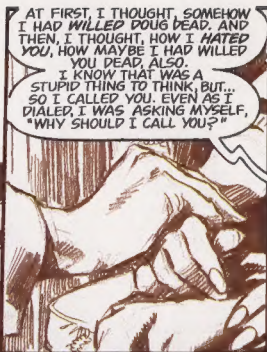


ALL
RIGHT. YOU
CAN GO
NOW.

WE
WOULDN'T
COVER UP A
MURDER. THAT'S
NOT OUR
STYLE.



DIERDRE... I SWEAR... I DIDN'T KILL HIM. I WISHED HIM DEAD, YES, BUT IT WAS ALWAYS BLOODLESS.



AT FIRST, I THOUGHT, SOMEHOW I HAD WILLED DOUG DEAD. AND THEN, I THOUGHT, HOW I HATED YOU, HOW MAYBE I HAD WILLED YOU DEAD, ALSO. I KNOW THAT WAS A STUPID THING TO THINK, BUT... SO I CALLED YOU. EVEN AS I DIALED, I WAS ASKING MYSELF, "WHY SHOULD I CALL YOU?"



I TRIED BLAMING YOU FOR EVERYTHING. WHEN YOUR PHONE RANG THERE WAS A PART OF ME THAT KNEW...

JUST KNEW!

...IF YOU DIDN'T ANSWER THEN, THAT LIKE DOUG...



...YOU WERE DEAD.



WHEN YOU ANSWERED, I WAS SPARED. MY MURDEROUS THOUGHTS WERE ONLY IN MY HEAD.



I WAS GOING TO LEAVE HIM. THAT'S THE CONCLUSION I'D COME TO. IF I COULD SURVIVE THOSE PICTURES, I TOLD MYSELF, I COULD SURVIVE THE SEPARATION.

I'M NOT SURE I CAN SURVIVE THIS.

YOU WILL.



IT WON'T BE EASY, BUT YOU WILL.

I'LL BE IN TOUCH.

PLEASE.



THINK SHE DID IT?

COULD HAVE. I DON'T SEE HER AS THE TYPE, ESPECIALLY, BUT THEN, WHO IS. ANYONE CAN BE PUSHED FAR ENOUGH.

MAYBE WE PUSHED HER.

WHAT?



NOT REALLY YOU GUYS. ME, I'M THE ONE WHO GOT YOU GUYS TO FIND OUT HER HUSBAND WAS CHEATING ON HER. MAYBE THAT WAS THE STRAW THAT BROKE THE CAMEL'S BACK.



THERE ARE OTHER POSSIBLE SCENARIOS. I'M NOT SAYING OUR PRESENCE COULDN'T HAVE ESCALATED EVENTS --

-- BUT DON'T BLAME YOURSELF, DIERDRE. THOSE WERE EVENTS WELL UNDERWAY BEFORE WE APPEARED.

WHAT KIND OF POSSIBILITIES ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

CURRUTHERS, FOR ONE. LET'S SAY THERE WAS SOME SORT OF SCAM GOING ON. CURRUTHERS WOULDN'T BE REAL HAPPY TO LEARN THAT BURNETT HAD DETECTIVES ON HIS TRAIL --

--NOT IF HE WAS PLANNING SOMETHING UNSCRUPULOUS LIKE PUTTING THE SCREWS TO SICK KIDS. HE COULD FEEL THAT BURNETT WAS A REAL LIABILITY.

NOW THE WAY I'VE GOT IT :CRUNCH: FIGURED, LEILA COULD HAVE :CRUNCH: LUCKED OUT, JUST BEEN AWAY, SHOPPING OR SOMETHING WHEN THE :CRUNCH: HIT MAN SLICED BURNETT.

I MEAN, CURRUTHERS WOULDN'T :CRUNCH: DO THE KILLING HIMSELF. SO, HERE'S MY PLAN...

WE SEE IF WE CAN'T CATCH CURRUTHERS AT THE MANHATTAN HEADQUARTERS FOR THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CLINIC. I'M SURE CONSTANCE WOULD LOVE TO SEE US AGAIN, AND WE COULD ASK OUR ESTEEMED MR. CURRUTHERS A FEW QUESTIONS.

BISHOP SAID TO STAY OUT OF IT.

I HEARD HIM. MY EARS ARE AS GOOD YOURS.



WELL, JUST KIND OF... INFORMALLY.

CHAPTER 9

THE OFFICE OFFERS ITS SINCEREST CONDOLENCES



They walk through the fluorescent, shadowless corridor past doorless, prefabricated cubicles that isolate individual employees and discourage human interaction while maintaining maximum observation by supervisors, who have real offices at the far end of the large workspace.

Constance Haynes has one of the enclosed offices, with a view of Battery Park and the Staten Island ferry docks. At first, Rainier does not recognize her. It's the sunglasses, he realizes. She shouldn't cover those beautiful eyes.

On the other hand, the shades will shield them from the scorn Constance is capable of radiating from those eyes, so perhaps it's for the best.

Rainier doesn't miss William Curruthers. Solidly confident. A presence. Hearty self-esteem. If he were being critical, he'd call it a pompous demeanor. Kind of guy brings out the worst in me, Rainier admits reluctantly. Wonder why that is?



LOOK WHO WE HAVE HERE. THE BOWERY BOYS AND SHIRLEY TEMPLE.

YOU'RE AN OLD FILM BUFF, TOO, HUH?

THAT'S ALL WE HAVE IN COMMON. I PRESUME THE SECURITY GUARD DOWNSTAIRS MADE YOU SIGN IN?

WE WOULDN'T WANT THE MAN TO LOSE HIS JOB. WE FILLED OUT EVERYTHING, NICE AND PROPER.

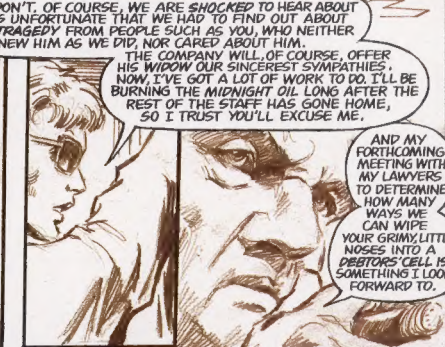
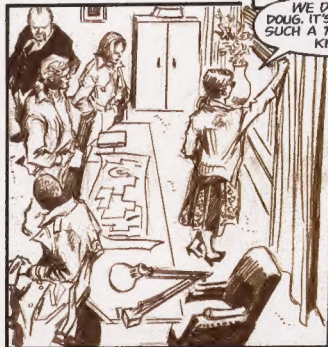
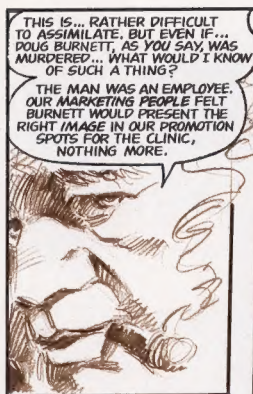
ALL RIGHT. WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?

THERE'S NO NEED BEGGING ME NOT TO FILE CHARGES AGAINST YOU FOR YOUR BARBAROUS DISRUPTION OF OUR NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CLINIC CHARITY BENEFIT.

THAT'S NOT WHAT WE ARE HERE FOR. WE THOUGHT WE SHOULD GIVE YOU FAIR WARNING THAT IF YOU INTEND TO USE DOUG BURNETT AS A WITNESS, HE'LL BE A MUTE ONE. BURNETT'S DEAD.

WHAT KIND OF CON GAME ARE YOU TWO PLAYING NOW?

NO GAMES, LADY. THE POLICE WILL GET AROUND TO BOTH OF YOU, PRETTY QUICK. TO ASK ABOUT YOUR CONNECTION WITH THE LATE, MURDERED MR. BURNETT.



CHAPTER 10

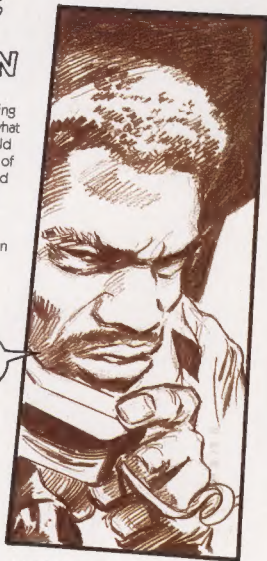
REACTIONS TO A LOADED GUN

Rainier enjoys watching Denning and Dierdre. Enjoying himself, what an odd sensation. Where's the old Rainier of Times Square capable of being bleak and morose to bored hookers, like some city-dwelling Heathcliff. He'll be back soon enough. Don't hurry his return.

Ted does a beautiful impression of a bonafide business magnate. Listen to him go to it. I'd believe him.

YES, SIR. I THANK YOU FOR BEING SO CANDID. IT WILL CERTAINLY HELP MY COMPANY IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH MR. CURRUTHERS. GOOD-BYE, NOW.

RIGHT. THANKS AGAIN. YOU GOT IT. 'BYE.

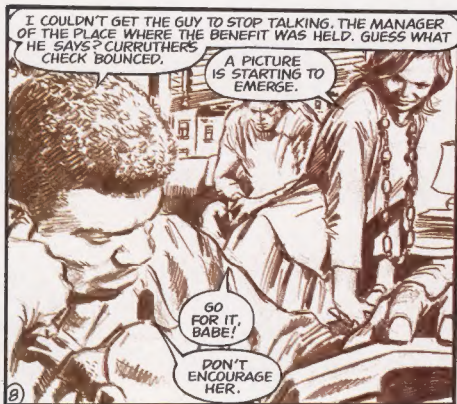


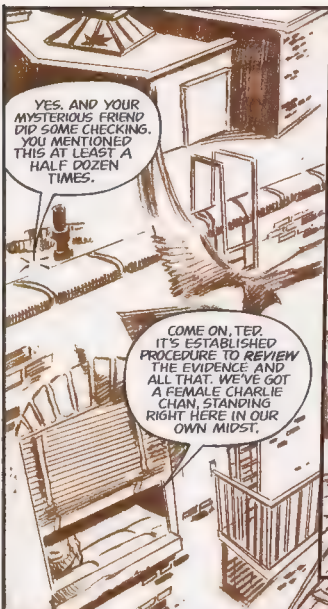
And Dierdre, her guilt is like a cancer in remission. Her enthusiasm for justice is a rejuvenating tonic.

Nothing has altered the act of murder; all their eyes carry the knowledge of violent death. Rainier remembers Leila Burnett's blue eyes, filled with tears that did not blur the memory of blood.

Ah, there's the old Rainier, true to form.

But hell, maybe they can at least clear Leila of the act, free her from suspicion and notoriety, but not the terrible history.





YES, AND YOUR MYSTERIOUS FRIEND DID SOME CHECKING. YOU MENTIONED THIS AT LEAST A HALF DOZEN TIMES.

COME ON, TED. IT'S ESTABLISHED PROCEDURE TO REVIEW THE EVIDENCE AND ALL THAT. WE'VE GOT A FEMALE CHARLIE CHAN, STANDING RIGHT HERE IN OUR OWN MIDST.



COME ON. YOU GUYS GET TO DO THIS ALL THE TIME, PIECING THE CLUES TOGETHER.

DIERDRE, WE DON'T SOLVE MURDERS ALL THE TIME. THAT IS ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE PRIVATE EYE FALLACIES.



FINE, BUT MY FRIEND DID TELL ME THAT THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION IN CERTAIN ECONOMIC ENCLAVES--

--AS TO CURRUTHERS' ABILITY TO WITHSTAND THE LOSSES HE HAS TAKEN IN THE MARKET IN THE LAST YEAR.

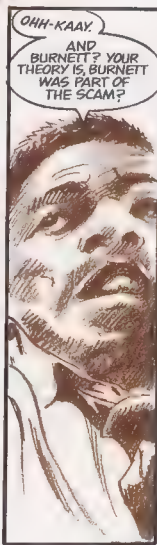


AND I LOVED THE WAY YOU CALLED UP THOSE REAL ESTATE AGENTS IN DOBB'S FERRY AND FOUND OUT CURRUTHERS RECENTLY SOLD HIS OLD FAMILY HOMESTEAD.



AND YOU THINK WHAT?

THE CHILDREN'S CLINIC IS A SCAM! CURRUTHERS IS GOING TO TAKE THOSE FUNDS AND SKIP!



OHH-KAAY. AND BURNETT? YOUR THEORY IS, BURNETT WAS PART OF THE SCAM?



MAYBE, MAYBE NOT. MAYBE BURNETT JUST HAPPENED TO STUMBLE ONTO THE SCAM.

THE GUY MAY HAVE BEEN A PSYCHOPATH WHO BEAT HIS WIFE, THAT DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN HE WOULD STEAL FROM SICK KIDS.

LET'S RIDE OUT TO SEE CURRUTHERS. LET'S SEE HOW HE REACTS WHEN WE POP THE NEWS THAT WE KNOW ABOUT HIS FINANCIAL CONDITION.

DEPENDING ON WHAT HE DOES, MAYBE WE THROW THE WHOLE SCAM THING AT HIM, SEE IF HE PANICS.

TELL YOU WHAT. YOU PLAY GROUCHO. I'LL BE CHICO. WE'LL LET HIM BE MARGARET DUMONT.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE THAT?

I THINK IT'S WISE. I THINK YOU SHOULD CARRY YOURS. YOU REMEMBER THE BOZO CHAUFFEUR WITH THE GUN?

I NEVER FORGET BOZOS WITH GUNS. I'M STILL NOT CARRYING A PIECE.

OKAY, WYATT EARR. BE THAT WAY.

YOU REALLY EXPECTING THAT KIND OF TROUBLE?

I'M NOT EXPECTING ANYTHING. IN THIS BUSINESS YOU DON'T EXPECT, YOU JUST PREPARE.

IS IT...OKAY IF I ASK YOU A PERSONAL QUESTION?

WHY I DON'T CARRY A GUN?

SEEMS ODD FOR A PRIVATE EYE...INVESTIGATOR.

I HAD TO SHOOT A TEENAGER ONCE... CASE CONCERNING THE FATHER WHO TALKED TO YOU ABOUT US... I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE.

BUT KILLING WAS NOT THE REASON I BECAME AN INVESTIGATOR.

I KNOW

YOU DON'T MIND IF I GO BACK TO THE NCC OFFICES AND CHECK OUT CONSTANCE, DO YOU?

NO, BUT WHAT ON EARTH FOR?

I JUST WANT TO ASK HER WHERE SHE GOT HER SUNGLASSES.

IT'S ALL RIGHT. REALLY. I HAVE NO INCLINATION TO BE ANYWHERE BULLETS MIGHT FLY.

DIERDRE, I THINK YOU SHOULD... MAYBE IT WOULD BE BEST IF WE HANDLED THIS ONE ALONE.

CHAPTER 11

THE MAN WHO WAS AN EASY TOUCH

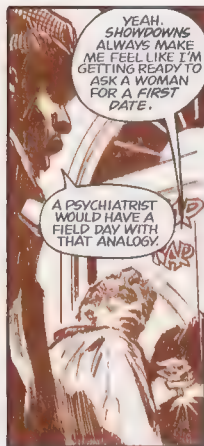
The tiny car reverberates like a tank thundering into a quiet place its operators intend to decimate.

The noise comes from a hole in the muffler or exhaust pipe. No sneaking up on the enemy in this rig, Denning concedes to himself glumly, aware that inspection sticker time is only a little over a month away and that the car will never pass.



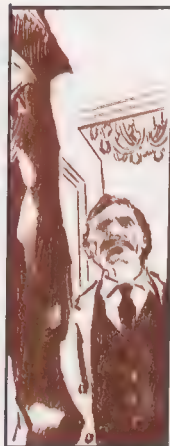
If you listen to those T.V. muffler ads, they tell you it won't cost much at all for a new, life-time guaranteed muffler. What they don't tell you is that none of your warranties cover the clamps and pipes and to whatever else the muffler is attached. Doug Burnett would have made a fine spokesman for the muffler companies.

YOU READY?



YEAH. SHOWDOWNS ALWAYS MAKE ME FEEL LIKE I'M GETTING READY TO ASK A WOMAN FOR A FIRST DATE.

A PSYCHIATRIST WOULD HAVE A FIELD DAY WITH THAT ANALOGY.



I WOULDN'T DO THAT. NOT UNLESS YOU HAVE A BAD SINUS CONDITION AND WANT IT CURED PERMANENTLY.



I'LL TAKE THAT.

WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO HURT YOURSELF

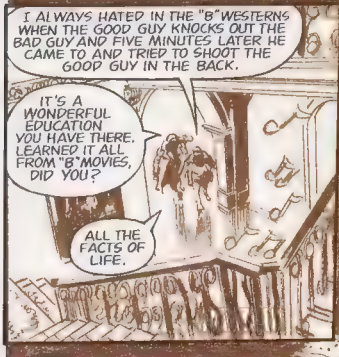


IT'S ALL YOURS, ROVER.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

JUST IN CASE HE COMES TO WHILE WE'RE HAVING A QUIET CHAT WITH MR. CURRUTHERS.



I ALWAYS HATED IN THE "B" WESTERNS WHEN THE GOOD GUY KNOCKS OUT THE BAD GUY AND FIVE MINUTES LATER HE CAME TO AND TRIED TO SHOOT THE GOOD GUY IN THE BACK.

IT'S A WONDERFUL EDUCATION YOU HAVE THERE. LEARNED IT ALL FROM "B" MOVIES, DID YOU?

ALL THE FACTS OF LIFE.

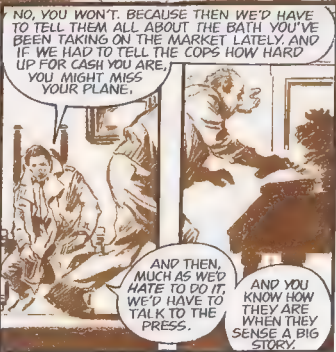


OSMOND, WHO IS IT?

IT'S NOT GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS.



YOU TWO DON'T REALLY THINK YOU CAN BARGE IN HERE IN THIS FASHION AND GET AWAY WITH IT, DO YOU? I'LL HAVE THE POLICE HERE IN THREE MINUTES.



NO, YOU WON'T. BECAUSE THEN WE'D HAVE TO TELL THEM ALL ABOUT THE BATH YOU'VE BEEN TAKING ON THE MARKET LATELY, AND IF WE HAD TO TELL THE COPS HOW HARD UP FOR CASH YOU ARE, YOU MIGHT MISS YOUR PLANE.

AND THEN, MUCH AS WE'D HATE TO DO IT, WE'D HAVE TO TALK TO THE PRESS.

AND YOU KNOW HOW THEY ARE WHEN THEY SENSE A BIG STORY.



SHARKS HAVE NOTHING ON THEM.

REPORTERS'LL LOVE THIS. EMBEZZLEMENT. FRAUD. MURDER. ALL AMONG THE VERY RICH.

HEY, THAT'S GOOD FOR A WHOLE THREE DAYS WORTH OF HEADLINES IN THE NEW YORK POST. THEY'LL GET THE SLEAZIEST SHOTS THEY CAN OF YOU, IN A TUX ... OR OUT.

MURDER? ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT BURNETT?

WHO ELSE?

LISTEN, YOU GUYS HAVE ME ALL WRONG. I THINK WE GOT OFF ON THE WRONG FOOT. MAYBE I'VE BEEN HASTY.

MAYBE WE CAN TALK THIS OUT. SETTLE OUR DIFFERENCES AMICABLY.

WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?

BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE YOU, I DON'T LIKE HOW YOU CHEATED KIDS WHO ARE SICK OR DYING. I DON'T LIKE HOW YOU USED DECENT IMPULSES TO GIVE.

WHAT ARE YOU CRUMB-BUMS SO SELF-RIGHTEOUS ABOUT?

IT'S NOT SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. IT'S DISGUST.

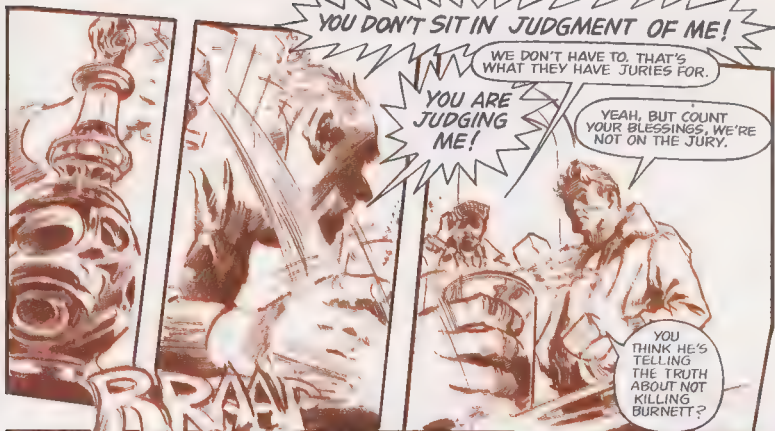
FOR WHAT? I NEVER UNDERSTAND YOU GUYS.

I MEAN, THINK ABOUT IT? WHAT DID I REALLY DO THAT WAS SO WRONG? DID I SHOOT SOMEBODY? TORTURE SOMEBODY? KILL SOMEBODY?

THAT'S WHAT WE THOUGHT. WE THINK YOU HAD DOUG BURNETT DONE AWAY WITH.

FORGET THE APPEAL.

WE'RE TURNING YOU IN.



YOU DON'T SIT IN JUDGMENT OF ME!

WE DON'T HAVE TO. THAT'S WHAT THEY HAVE JURIES FOR.

YOU ARE JUDGING ME!

YEAH, BUT COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS, WE'RE NOT ON THE JURY.

YOU THINK HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT NOT KILLING BURNETT?

WHY WOULD I KILL THE MAN? I TOLD YOU I HARDLY KNEW HIM. LOOK, YOU HAVE TO REALIZE THAT MOST OF THE MONEY I TOOK WAS FROM PEOPLE WHO WILL USE IT AS A TAX WRITE-OFF.

I MEAN, WHERE'S THE REAL HARM IN THAT? WHEN I WAS MAKING THE BUCKS, I GAVE TO EVERYTHING. ASK ANYBODY, I WAS AN EASY TOUCH.

YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT BURNETT, YOU SHOULD ASK CONSTANCE. I MEAN, AFTER ALL, SHE'S THE ONE WHO HIRED BURNETT FOR THE P.R. JOB.

AND TAKE IT FROM ME, THEY WEREN'T JUST BUSINESS ASSOCIATES.

CONSTANCE WAS FOOLING AROUND WITH BURNETT?

WHAT WAS IT DIERDRE SAID SHE WAS GOING TO DO?

YOU KNOW WHAT SHE SAID, SHE WAS GOING TO SEE CONSTANCE.

YOU KNOW WHAT I HATE?

WHAT?

WHEN WE FIGURE OUT WHO THE MURDERER IS...

...AND WE'RE WRONG!

CHAPTER 12 GRAY LIGHT IN A RAT'S DEN



The shadowy cubicle stalls seem to be waiting, like a ghost town anticipating dawn resurrection.

The fluorescent lights are dark, save for the main hall and the ones in Constance Haynes' office which remain bright. Beacons to entice the ghosts' return.

I don't know how to begin, Dierdre worries, listening to her footfalls as if they might give her the words.

What do I say to her? How do I get through the tough exterior? Why bother? Going to help Leila didn't end up helping, did it?

No, but one mustn't let failure dictate the future.

She feels a kinship with Denning in that moment, understands the sorrow, but also anger. He wanted to go through life without having to kill another human being, until one night he had been left no choice. Here she is, by choice, but not sure it is the right choice.



So she listens to echoes and ponders how to begin.





I DON'T WANT YOU TO BE. I'M NOT HERE TO TRY TO SCARE YOU.

MAYBE IT'S TO EMPATHIZE WITH YOU.



EMPATHIZE? PEDDLE IT ELSEWHERE, LADY.

WHEN WE WERE HERE EARLIER... I KEPT WONDERING WHY YOU WERE WEARING SUNGLASSES WHILE YOU WERE DOING PAPERWORK. YOU HADN'T WORN SUNGLASSES THAT DAY AT DOBB'S FERRY.



AND I HAD NO DOUBT YOU KNOW YOUR EYES ARE ONE OF YOUR MOST PERSUASIVE FEATURES. I SAW YOU USE THEM ON DENNING AND RAINIER FOR MAXIMUM EFFECT.

SO IT STARTED ME TO THINKING... AND A FACT HIT ME,

SINCE IT'S A FACT THAT I'VE DEALT WITH A NUMBER OF TIMES...



...I'M SURPRISED IT DIDN'T STRIKE ME SOONER. WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN BEATEN OFTEN DO THAT... WEAR SUNGLASSES TO HIDE BLACK EYES.

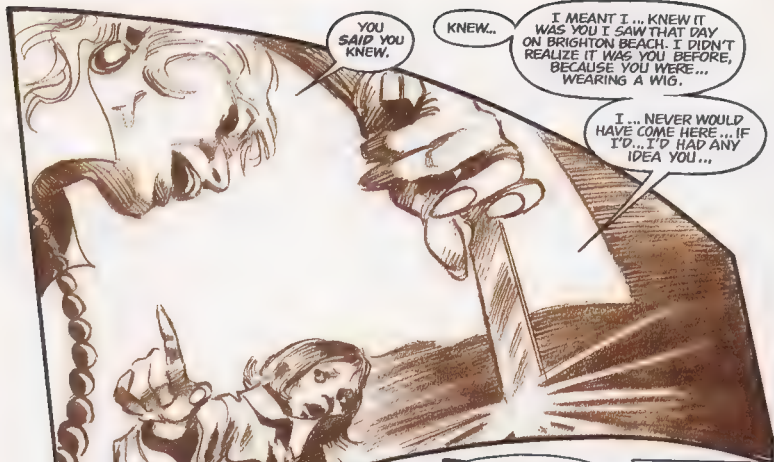


YES.

SO YOU KNOW.



JESUS! ARE YOU NUTS?



YOU
SAID YOU
KNEW.

KNEW...

I MEANT I... KNEW IT
WAS YOU I SAW THAT DAY
ON BRIGHTON BEACH. I DIDN'T
REALIZE IT WAS YOU BEFORE,
BECAUSE YOU WERE...
WEARING A WIG.

I... NEVER WOULD
HAVE COME HERE... IF
I'D... I'D HAD ANY
IDEA YOU...

I THOUGHT
YOU WERE ONE OF
HIS VICTIMS.

YES, I WAS
HAVING A FEW KICKS
WITH THE DUMB
STUPID HUNK.

SOMETIMES WE USED TO MAKE
IT RIGHT ON HIS WIFE'S BED...

OH, HE
BELTED ME
ONE. A BEAUT,
ISN'T IT?

THIS
IS HIS
RAZOR.

...WHILE SHE
WAS AT HER AEROBICS
CLASS, TONING UP.

THAT'S HOW I KNEW
WHERE HIS RAZOR WAS.
I TOOK IT. I THOUGHT
MAYBE THE COPS MIGHT
THINK WIFEY DISPOSED
OF IT.

YOU KNOW WHERE
I'M FROM? I GREW UP
IN AN APARTMENT
HOUSE IN QUEENS. I
HAD FIVE BROTHERS
AND SISTERS. THE
FAMILY HAD FOUR
ROOMS.

WE LIVED ON TOP
OF EACH OTHER,
LIKE RATS IN A HOLE.
IT SEEMED LIKE MY
MOTHER WAS ALWAYS
TRYING TO GET THE
WINDOWS CLEAN SO
THAT GRAY LIGHT
COULD COME INTO
THE RAT'S DEN.

NOWADAYS, WHEN MY
PARENTS COME TO VISIT
ME ON PARK AVENUE
THEY DON'T KNOW
WHAT TO MAKE OF IT.

THEIR LITTLE GIRL,
SO SUCCESSFUL... HUGE
WINDOWS THAT ARE
NEVER DIRTY. SOMEONE
CLIMBS THIRTY FLOORS
TO CLEAN THEM.

I SAY "SEE MA, SEE
WHAT YOU CAN DO?" SHE
SMILES HER LITTLE DOG SMILE.
IT'S GOT HURT AND PRIDE IN
IT AND YOU CAN SEE THE TIP
OF HER TONGUE JUST
LIKE A DOG'S.



YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE... OLD BOY-FRIENDS AND EX-EMPLOYERS...

...EVEN MY OWN FAMILY, EVEN MY MOTHER AND FATHER, YOU NAME THEM...

...THEY TOLD ME I WANTED TOO MUCH! THAT I SHOULD SETTLE FOR WHAT I HAD!
YOU SEE WHERE I AM NOW? YOU SEE THIS OFFICE? IT'S MINE! I CONTROL IT.

NINETY-TWO STORIES UP AND THIS IS MY DOMAIN! CURRUTHERS, HE'S JUST A FIGUREHEAD, HE'D BE THE FIRST TO TELL YOU. I'M HIS FRONTLINE COMMANDER.

NO ONE

IS GOING TO

TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME.

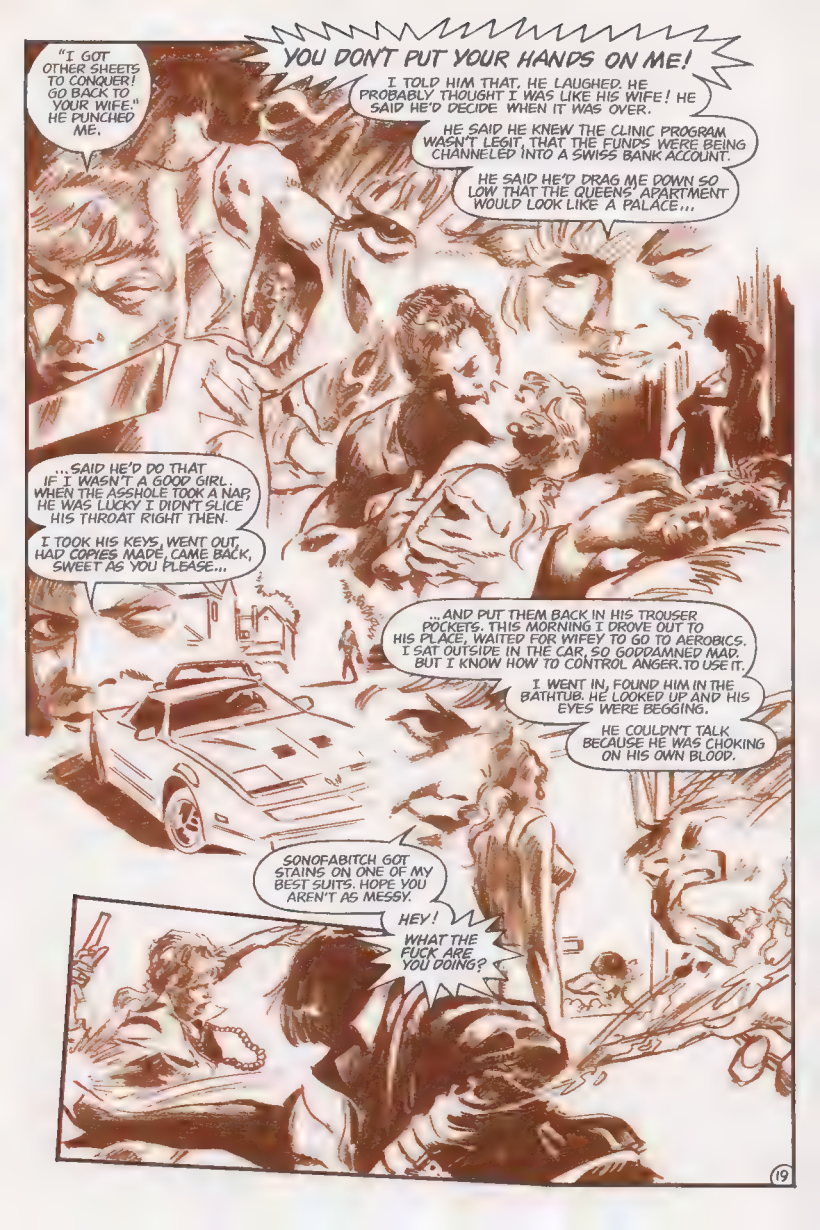
WHAT DO YOU THINK LIFE IS, CONSTANCE? DYNASTY? ONLY BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE GET TO LIVE, HAVE AMBITIONS, HAVE DREAMS?

MOST PEOPLE DON'T DARE TO TRY TO TOUCH THEIR DREAMS. I DIDN'T JUST DREAM. I DID. AND WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO, LOSE ALL OF THAT JUST BECAUSE I WANTED A LITTLE SEXUAL RELEASE FROM SOME MALE MODEL?

I LEARNED A LONG TIME AGO, THAT WHAT MEN DO IS TAKE FROM YOU.

I LEARNED TO MAKE THOSE RULES WORK FOR ME, TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE I WAS GIVING THEM WHAT THEY WANTED, BUT I ALWAYS CAME OUT AHEAD, KIDDO!

WHO DID THAT ASSHOLE THINK HE WAS? I TOLD HIM, "THE GOOD TIMES ARE OVER, BABY, FOR YOU AND ME!"



"I GOT
OTHER SHEETS
TO CONQUER!
GO BACK TO
YOUR WIFE."
HE PUNCHED
ME.

YOU DON'T PUT YOUR HANDS ON ME!

I TOLD HIM THAT, HE LAUGHED. HE
PROBABLY THOUGHT I WAS LIKE HIS WIFE! HE
SAID HE'D DECIDE WHEN IT WAS OVER.

HE SAID HE KNEW THE CLINIC PROGRAM
WASN'T LEGIT, THAT THE FUNDS WERE BEING
CHANNELLED INTO A SWISS BANK ACCOUNT.

HE SAID HE'D DRAG ME DOWN SO
LOW THAT THE QUEEN'S APARTMENT
WOULD LOOK LIKE A PALACE...

...SAID HE'D DO THAT
IF I WASN'T A GOOD GIRL.
WHEN THE ASSHOLE TOOK A NAP,
HE WAS LUCKY I DIDN'T SLICE
HIS THROAT RIGHT THEN.

I TOOK HIS KEYS, WENT OUT,
HAD COPIES MADE, CAME BACK,
SWEET AS YOU PLEASE...

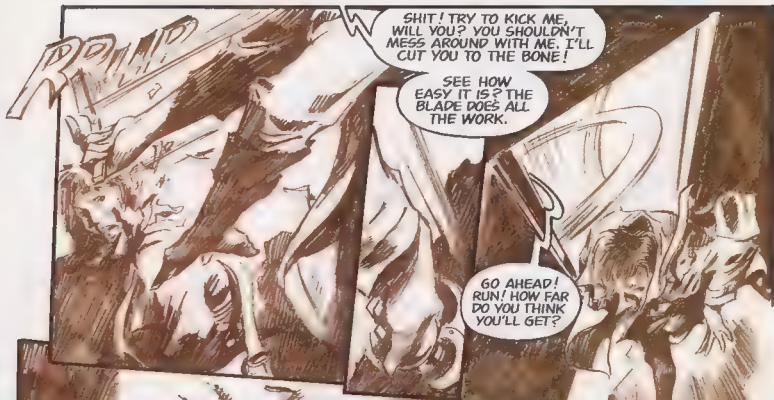
... AND PUT THEM BACK IN HIS TROUSER
POCKETS. THIS MORNING I DROVE OUT TO
HIS PLACE, WAITED FOR WIFEY TO GO TO AEROBICS.
I SAT OUTSIDE IN THE CAR, SO GODDAMNED MAD.
BUT I KNOW HOW TO CONTROL ANGER. TO USE IT.

I WENT IN, FOUND HIM IN THE
BATHTUB. HE LOOKED UP AND HIS
EYES WERE BEGGING.

HE COULDN'T TALK
BECAUSE HE WAS CHOKING
ON HIS OWN BLOOD.

SONOFABITCH GOT
STAINS ON ONE OF MY
BEST SUITS. HOPE YOU
AREN'T AS MESSY.

HEY!
WHAT THE
FUCK ARE
YOU DOING?



SHIT! TRY TO KICK ME,
WILL YOU? YOU SHOULDN'T
MESS AROUND WITH ME. I'LL
CUT YOU TO THE BONE!

SEE HOW
EASY IT IS? THE
BLADE DOES ALL
THE WORK.

GO AHEAD!
RUN! HOW FAR
DO YOU THINK
YOU'LL GET?



NEVER MAKE THE OUTSIDE
DOORS BEFORE SHE'S ON
ME WITH THAT RAZOR...
OH LORD, IT HURTS!

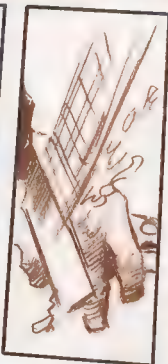
GO BY,
PLEASE...
GO BY.



THERE'S ONLY ONE
WAY OUT TO THE ELEVATOR
BANKS, BABY!

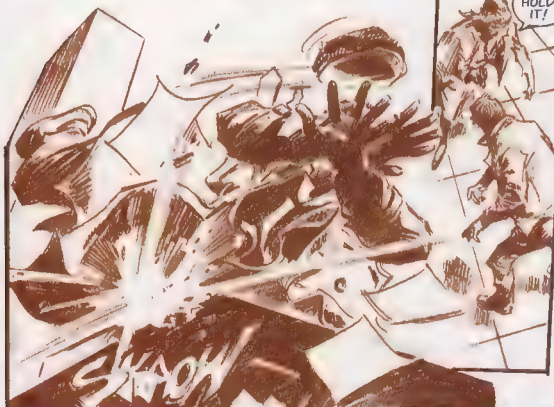
I'VE GOT ALL
NIGHT TO FIND
YOU, HONEY...

...BECAUSE
I'M BETWEEN
YOU AND THEM!





JESUS! DON'T
HIT HER TOWARD
THE GUN!



HOLD
IT!



WHERE'S YOUR
FAST WIT NOW?
WHAT'D YOU
TWO COME HERE
TO DO? RESCUE THE
LADY FAIR?



THINK YOUR PARTNER
CAN HELP YOU? THAT'S
WHAT YOU'RE THINKING
ISN'T IT? NEVER
HAPPEN.



HE CAN'T
REACH ME
IN TIME.

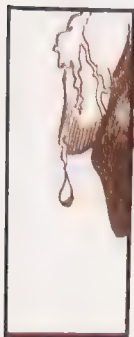
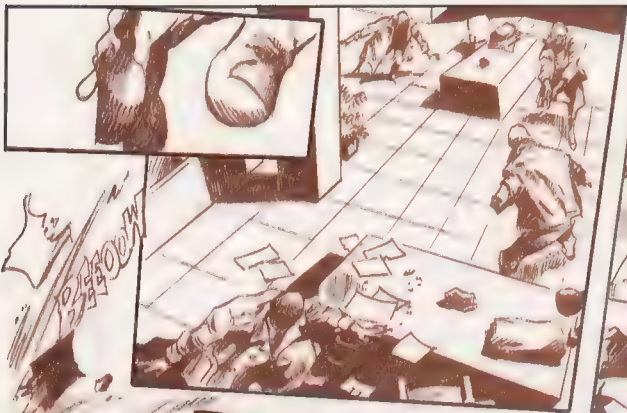
HAND
HURT? POOR
BABY.

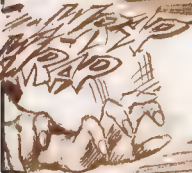
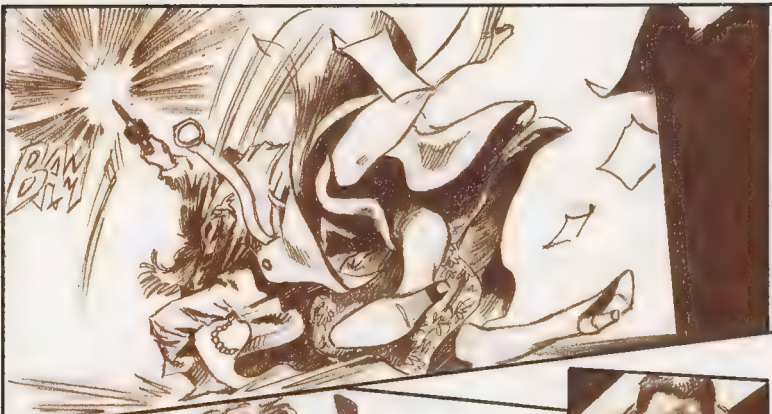


WHEN THE
NEXT DROP OF
BLOOD HITS THE
FLOOR...

...I'M GOING
TO PULL THE
TRIGGER.







I'M GLAD
YOU GUYS CAME TO
RESCUE ME.

YEAH.

LUCKY
FOR YOU.



EPILOGUE 1



WELL, YOU SHOULDN'T BE A STRANGER OR ANYTHING NOW THAT... YOU KNOW...

I MEAN...

...JUST BECAUSE WE'VE GOT THIS ALL CLEARED UP.



I MEAN, I THINK YOU COULD SUCKER TED INTO TAKING ANOTHER CASE

SNAP

JUST LIKE THAT.



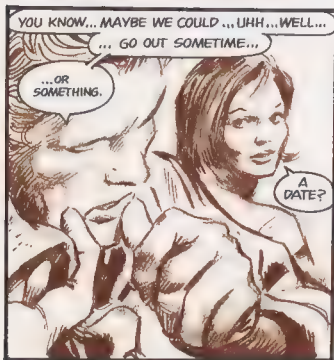
WHAT ABOUT YOU? HE'S THE BLEEDING HEART OF THE GROUP. I'M THE LEVEL-HEADED ONE.

I'M SURE HE'LL BE GLAD TO HEAR IT.



HE'LL LAUGH THE WAY YOU DID.

WELL, I'M OFF.



YOU KNOW... MAYBE WE COULD ...UHH...WELL...
... GO OUT SOMETIME...

...OR SOMETHING.

A DATE?



WELL, YEAH. MAYBE, DINNER. A MOVIE. YOU KNOW. WHATEVER.



I AM SEEING SOMEONE AT THE PRESENT...

AH, WELL... IT WAS JUST A THOUGHT.



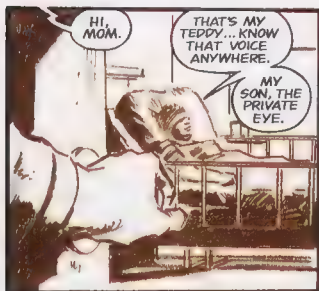
BUT IT'S NOT ANYBODY SERIOUS.

OH, NO?

NO.



EPILOGUE 2



Detectives Inc.

THE MOVIE

The Short Version — Part 3



Special effects supervisor Eric Goto and Writer/Director Don McGregor prepare Marsha Childers McGregor for an attack with a straight-edged razor. Two layers of gelatin made flesh are fitted over a metal body to protect the actress from real injury.



Director/Writer Don McGregor works on the staging for the suspenseful, violent confrontation at the movie's conclusion with Rainier (Richard Douglass) and Caroline Carrigan.

When we had the first cast reading of the script for "A Terror of Dying Dreams," I had no idea what kind of reaction we would get from the people selected to play the characters. Most of the performers did not read comics. They had never heard of Don McGregor or Detectives Inc. Comics work was not necessarily held against you, but it didn't have much meaning for them, either.

One of the actors wanted to know how I could make the transition from comic scripts to screenplays, more or less thinking that screenplays are more difficult to write. I told him that I thought that comic scripts were actually harder to write. I still think that. I also told him that most people who don't read comics consider them a second-rate medium, inferior to movies, even if some movies are multi-million dollar versions of comic created characters. Like Rodney Dangerfield, comics don't get no respect.

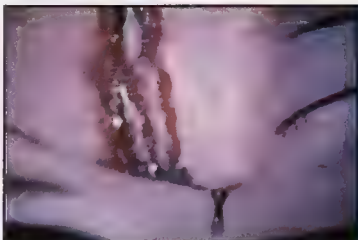
I have never considered comics second-rate. My love for them, and the possibilities that you can do as a story-teller in them, has never diminished.

I have been misquoted on this next point so let me set the record straight. The mechanics of writing comics are stricter, often less flexible. We are talking about the writing stage now.

In comics, when you are writing a dialogue scene, you have to be fortunate enough to be working with an artist like Gene Colan, who cares more about human drama than drawing bulging biceps and breasts. In a long dialogue scene your attention to the physical details of what the characters are doing as they speak must be accounted for from panel to panel. If you don't want the scene to end up being a series of talking heads, you must know the stage-play, you must consider the nuances of expression and reaction, you must be aware that events progress, a cup of coffee is sipped, drained,



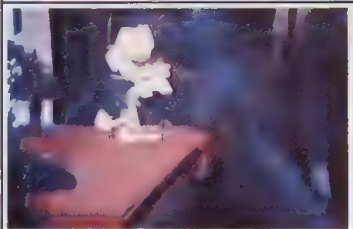
The straight-edge razor slashes across the back of Rainier's hand and a bloodily realistic gash appears along its path.



A drop of blood hanging from the edge of Rainier's hand, as the killer waits for it to drop.



Artist/playwright/actor Billy Graham as Denning's father, Giles, having some good-natured fun at his son's expense.



Ted Denning (Alex Simmons) finds himself staring into the barrel of a gun. 2) The killer fires! 3) Denning gets out of the damned way! Special effects wizard Eric Goto, wired a rolladex to 4) detonate at the proper moment and movie magic is made.

discarded, whatever. In film, the actors' faces continually animate a dialogue scene, and you aren't pressured by the fact that you have already used up 10% of your allowed page count (as an example), as you might be when you are writing a comic.

It is shooting the script that is more difficult to achieve than the illustrating of a script, because the set up for one shot requires the efforts of so many people, requires knowledge of the electronic equipment needed to make sure sound, lighting, focus, everything is correct. You need a crew of talented, hard-working people who often have to contend with locales that can present any number of unexpected problems. You could find that a religious ceremony is due to be held right where you are filming. You could find mysterious radio waves coming onto your soundtrack like a sound phantom. The night before the morning you arrive to film at a beautiful Connecticut house set deep in trees, you could find a water pipe has burst, ripping a hole in the ceiling and dripping down the chandelier. Slick Manhattan rip-off artists might steal thousands of dollars worth of equipment in broad daylight, while you are out there with a camera and could have filmed them in the act, thieves who would make you wish you had a real pair of detectives standing around the city set.

All of these incidents and more occurred.

Another difference in films and comics is that there is no danger involved when you tell Gene Colan that Denning gets tossed over a car hood, that Dierdre gets kicked in the head, or that Rainier has a straight-edged razor slashed down across the back of his hand.

One of the most pleasant experiences I had in making this film was meeting Eric Goto, our special effects wizard. Eric is soft-spoken, gentle, with a quiet smile that is relaxing and warm even after twelve hours on a cramped movie set. He can create a bloody wound so convincing you will flinch.

I would call Eric and say, "Listen, Eric, I need to have a straight-edged razor come down across the back of Rainier's hand, and we are going to cut in close on that happening, and we have to see the cut actually appear, see it rip across his flesh, but the stunt has to be absolutely safe. Can we do that?"

He would quietly say "Okaaaay," as if already mulling over in his mind how that might be accomplished. "Give me a week, Don, and I'll get back to you."

I'd call and say, "I need a gun fired at Denning and the bullet's got to hit something, maybe a vase, possibly, but something that shows a bullet has struck, and Denning has to be in frame, but it has to be 100% safe for Alex. Can we do that?"

And Eric would quietly say, "Okaaaay."

We took six hours to do a slash across Marsha's back.



Marsha Childers McGregor as Dierdre Stevens, waiting to face Leila Burnett, with lighting effects by Mark Gasper and Steve Bryant.

The shot will last, maybe, one second on screen. But I'll tell you now, you'll be convinced it actually happened.

Now the movie has been completely shot. This does not mean you are going to see it any time soon, so please don't go rushing out to your neighborhood video store just yet to find it. There is an awful lot of post-production work to be done on a movie. Forty-some hours of footage have to be logged and edited into two hours. Sound problems have to be corrected. There're all kinds of technical details that have to be considered.

Also, Shamus Productions has primarily filmed this as a presentation piece. I let Ed Via handle the business end. I trust him, without reservation. 'He has much more expertise in that area than I do. Like Dean Mullaney, Ed has been a pleasure to work for and with. I think it's also important to mention that this graphic mystery version is highly abbreviated from the original shooting script. In other words, there was more room to explore all of the characters during individual scenes than there was in the comics version. Transitions in attitude occur more naturally, in a less compressed fashion.

Through all this effort, there was Ed doing what most producers don't do. He was out on the line with me, standing in the cold when we were freezing our asses off. Try filming a scene at Brighton Beach in November, and you'll know what I mean.

There were people like Linda Albert, Sandra Messinger, Doonie Katzman, and Betty Appleton, among others, who were kind enough to let us invade their homes and offices. When a movie crew comes into your living space, believe me, it is like an invasion. The Crown Nursing Home, The Catina Restaurant, Rudi's Beau Rivage, among other places, were delightfully helpful when we had to spend longer hours than we'd ever contemplated to finish a location scene. Linda Albert did more than that. She worked on make-up for the performers and came to as many of the location shootings as she could and worked with the crew. Steve Bryant saved our hash in the sound department many a time when the gremlins were playing havoc with us. Lorraine Walker worked in so many capacities during the course of this production, always with patience and calm, that it is impossible to list her under one function. She was of immeasurable help to Mark Gasper.

This is beginning to sound like Academy Awards night, right?

I'm already running overtime.

But this is the short version, remember?

Take care. Be kind to each other, be kind to yourselves.

And hang in there.

Don McGregor
April 1987



Director/Writer Don McGregor and Director of Photography Mark Gasper ponder how to get a shot in the cramped confines of the Detectives Inc. office.



Producer Ed Via makes careful notes during a location shoot on 96th St. in Manhattan to make sure the director can't claim lapse of memory for his actions at some future date.



Lauren McGregor sits on a park bench in Riverside Park, wondering why her father woke her up at the ungodly hour of 5 a.m. to freeze in the cold April wind.



Dierdre and Rainier prepare to say good-bye. That's all, folks!

Photo: Jane Aruns

Photo: Jane Aruns

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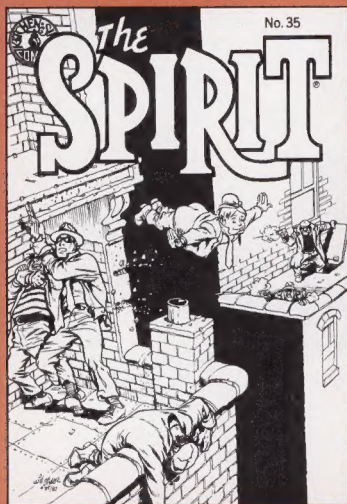
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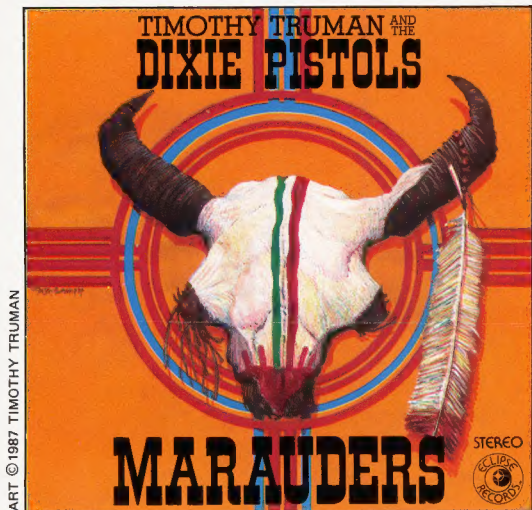


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